

ARIZONA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS
Program Services
Division Director's Office

M E M O R A N D U M

TO: Arizona Department of Correctional Employees

FROM: Steven Ickes, Division Director, Program Services

DATE: December 6, 2005

SUBJECT: New Classification Manual

I take great pride in presenting you with this new Classification Manual.

In February 2004, ADC contacted the National Institute of Corrections (NIC) to request technical assistance in the enhancement of its present classification system which had not been updated or validated since 1991. With the assistance of the NIC consultants, an internal workgroup of ADC experts were convened to review and revise the inmate classification system. The goals of the new classification system are public safety now and later by ensuring inmates are classified to the appropriate custody levels. Inmates who pose a threat to the orderly operation of institutions, safety of staff and other inmates will not be allowed to reduce to lower custody levels while still assessed as a threat. Inmates will be assessed on their level of participation in work, programs and their behavior, both positive and negative. Inmates who do not pose a security threat and meet programming expectations will be classified to lower custody levels when appropriate.

On October 25, 2005, ADC implemented the new and automated inmate custody classification system. Reliable classification instruments are essential to operating a safe and secure correctional system.

- The new classification system that ADC has developed is based on objective criteria and is designed so that all inmates are classified to the appropriate custody level, programs and work assignments, improving safety for our staff, the state, and the inmate population.
- Validated, objective criteria will determine custody level, and custody scores will determine facility assignment.
- The current Public Risk Scores Levels 1- 5 will change with the new system to Minimum, Close, Medium and Maximum to better reflect the real differences in inmate management. Placement in Minimum – Level 1 will require special assessment.
- Effective January 2006, all new arrivals will be classified at ADC Intake and Assessment Centers using the new classification system.
- Under the old classification system, inmates were reclassified every 180 days. With the implementation of the new classification system, all currently confined inmates will be reclassified at their next 180-day review. At that time, future re-classification reviews will change to every 12 months although events impacting custody level such as significant disciplinary rule violations, a detainer, or changes in length of confinement, may result in some inmates' reviews occurring sooner.

The new inmate custody classification system also features:

- Increased custody level scores for violence history and disciplinary actions for assaults resulting in serious injury;
- Inmate classification is based on the crime for which the inmate is convicted, not the offense behavior. However, offense behavior may affect custody level as aggravating or mitigating factors as warranted;
- Discontinuation of the 60-day review after initial classification. Further, the initial classification and 365-day reclassifications will no longer require approval from Central Office Classification.
- Central Classification is the Approving Authority for custody overrides, placement in maximum custody institutions and institution assignments.
- Good work evaluations and successful participation in programs may positively impact custody classification.
- Replacement of the Institution Risk Score with an Internal Risk Score.
- The Internal Risk Score uses the same criteria as the initial classification and may be used in determining appropriate work and program assignments.
- The Warden and Unit Administrators have final approving authority on Internal Risk Scores and inmate work assignments.
- Due Process hearings for Classification decisions (except for maximum custody) are discontinued and there is no longer an appeal process except for inmates placed in maximum custody.
- The department has also prepared an informational video that is available on the Internet at www.adc.state.az.us.

This new classification manual provides a comprehensive reference source for those who make daily decisions regarding an inmate's custody classification and placement. This manual shall be implemented on the publication date indicated within its pages.